

NCA
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COLOMBO PLAN WASHINGTON MEETING PREVIEW

ANNCR:

OFFICIALS FROM MORE THAN 25 ASIAN AND WESTERN COUNTRIES WILL MEET IN WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK (NOV. 28-DEC. 6) FOR THE 27TH SESSION OF THE COLOMBO PLAN. THE COLOMBO PLAN IS A COOPERATIVE EFFORT FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC. VOA'S STEPHANIE MANN HAS THIS PREVIEW OF THE UPCOMING CONFERENCE BEING HOSTED BY THE UNITED STATES.

VOICE:

THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S DISCUSSIONS WILL BE "DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES FOR MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS." DURING THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF THE CONFERENCE, DELEGATES WILL REFINE ISSUES WHICH WILL BE DISCUSSED BY THEIR GOVERNMENTS' MINISTERS IN LATER SESSIONS. THE HEAD OF THE U.S. DELEGATION AT THE MINISTERIAL MEETING WILL BE THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, JOHN GILLIGAN.

THE COLOMBO PLAN WAS LAUNCHED IN 1950 AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR NATIONS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC TO WORK TOGETHER TOWARD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE PLAN HAS 21 DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AS MEMBERS, INCLUDING BURMA, INDONESIA, CAMBODIA, SOUTH KOREA, LAOS, THAILAND AND VIETNAM, AS WELL AS MANY SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES. THE SIX DONOR NATIONS WHICH ARE MEMBERS OF THE COLOMBO PLAN ARE THE UNITED STATES, AUSTRALIA, CANADA, JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND AND BRITAIN. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE DONORS OVER THE PAST 27 YEARS IS ESTIMATED AT MORE THAN 50 THOUSAND MILLION U.S. DOLLARS. THE UNITED STATES HAS PLEDGED ALMOST 930 MILLION DOLLARS IN AID TO COLOMBO PLAN COUNTRIES DURING THIS FISCAL YEAR. ASSISTANCE

HAS TAKEN THE FORM OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TRAINING IN AGRICULTURE AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION, AND INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY.

RECENT ESTIMATES BY THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION AND THE WORLD BANK SHOW THAT ASIAN POVERTY ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF THE POVERTY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. MORE THAN 80 PERCENT OF THE ASIAN POPULATION ARE DESCRIBED AS HAVING DEFICIENT DIETS, AND ABOUT 70 PERCENT DRINK UNSAFE WATER.

LAST YEAR'S COLOMBO PLAN MEETING WAS HELD IN NEPAL. THE DELEGATES AT THAT SESSION WORKED AT DEVISING A NEW DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO ATTACK THE PROBLEMS OF POPULATION GROWTH, UNEMPLOYMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE COLOMBO PLAN MEETING IS CONSIDERED AN IMPORTANT FORUM FOR DISCUSSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES. AND NEXT WEEK'S SESSION IN WASHINGTON IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR LEADERS FROM THE MEMBER NATIONS TO COMPARE IDEAS ON LONG-RANGE PLANS.

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